

THE NATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING LEADER SCHOOLS PROGRAM



I challenge every state and every school in this country to offer in a disciplined and organized way, every young person in a school a chance to serve.

--President Clinton

Presidents' Summit on America's Future, Philadelphia, April 1997

OVERVIEW

To become a National Service-Learning Leader School, a middle school or high school must apply to a state-level review panel, which will select the state winners and national nominees. Each nominee will prepare a portfolio demonstrating its excellence in service-learning. These portfolios will be screened at the national level.

Schools recognized at the national level will receive Presidential recognition and other rewards. More importantly, Leader Schools will receive the honor of being asked to serve as "active winners" for two years. During that time, they will serve as models of excellence and encourage and assist other schools in making service to the community an important part of their curriculum and activities.

The New Jersey Department of Education is pleased to be able to provide this opportunity to celebrate service-learning excellence in New Jersey's high schools and middle schools. This package contains information on how schools from New Jersey can apply.

The National Service-Learning Leader Schools program is a Presidential initiative that will recognize middle schools and high schools from across the nation for high-quality service-learning. In its third year, 2000-2001, the program will recognize up to 100 middle schools and 100 high schools for their exemplary integration of student service into the curriculum and the life of the school. Through recognition, and the attendant publicity and peer assistance activities of the recognized schools, this initiative seeks to encourage and increase service-learning opportunities for America's students.

A National Service-Learning Leader School must demonstrate service-learning that enhances student learning, addresses the needs of the community, is well integrated into the life of the school, and is designed to foster civic responsibility. There are many ways to incorporate service effectively into a school's curriculum and culture. This national initiative will recognize schools that have done so in exemplary ways.

WHO IS SPONSORING THIS PROGRAM?

The President has charged the *Corporation for National Service*, an independent federal agency, with the responsibility for conducting the National Service-Learning Leader Schools program. A leader in the movement to advance service-learning and service by students nationwide, the Corporation for National Service also administers the President's Student Service Challenge which is composed of the National Student Service Scholarship Program and the President's Student Service Awards, as well as Learn and Serve America, which engages students from kindergarten through college in community projects that integrate service and learning. Through programs funded by Learn and Serve America, over one million students participate in service activities annually.

Working collaboratively with the Corporation for National Service at the state level, the program is being coordinated by the New Jersey Learn and Serve America Program at the New Jersey Department of Education. The New Jersey Learn and Serve America Program supports service-learning programs in schools and community-based organizations that engage youth in addressing education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs. Grants are given to New Jersey school districts to create service-learning programs or replicate existing programs, as well as to provide training and development to school administrators, faculty, and volunteers.

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning combines meaningful service to the community with classroom studies in a way that improves student learning and strengthens the community. Students work in collaboration with community members, teachers, and classmates to meet real community needs, while learning more about math, science, English, social studies, and other subjects, as well as civic responsibility and effective citizenship.

Definition of Service-Learning

The Corporation for National Service uses the definition provided in the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which describes service-learning as an educational method:

- ◆ Under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- ◆ Which is coordinated within an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community;
- ◆ Which helps foster civic responsibility;
- ◆ Which is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participant is enrolled; and
- ◆ Which provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

WHAT WILL RECOGNIZED SCHOOLS RECEIVE?

National Service-Learning Leader Schools will receive national recognition for their outstanding service-learning efforts, including the following:

- ◆ A National Service-Learning Leader School banner;
- ◆ An invitation to attend a three-day National Service-Learning Leader Schools technical assistance workshop in Washington, D.C. (travel expenses for two participants from each Leader School will be covered);
- ◆ National and local publicity opportunities, including press releases and possible articles in the general press, education media, and service-related publications;
- ◆ The honor of serving as a model for other schools, both locally and nationally;
- ◆ Membership in a national network of Leader Schools working to share information on effective practices and advance service-learning as a teaching, learning and community-building strategy for the 21st century; and
- ◆ Ongoing support and technical assistance from the Corporation for National Service.

In addition to the 10 National Service-Learning Leader School nominees (5 in each category), an additional number of applicants will be selected as New Jersey Service-Learning Leader Schools and will receive statewide recognition for their outstanding service-learning efforts, including the following:

- ◆ An award letter from the Commissioner of Education;
- ◆ A New Jersey Service-Learning Leader School plaque;
- ◆ Local publicity opportunities, including press releases and possible articles in the general press, education media, and service-related publications;
- ◆ The honor of serving as a model for other schools; and
- ◆ The opportunity to be entered in other national and statewide recognition events.

WHAT WILL NATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING LEADER SCHOOLS DO?

Being selected as a National Service-Learning Leader School is a great honor. It is a recognition of the school's excellence in service-learning. But this is more than an awards program. National Service-Learning Leader Schools will be *active winners* for two years. One of the goals of service-learning is instilling an ethic of service in students. Leader Schools will be asked to demonstrate their commitment to that ethic by assisting other schools in making service to the community an important part of their curriculum and activities.

Leader Schools will share their work, experience, and knowledge with other schools seeking to initiate or strengthen service-learning. They may also be called upon to share their work and experience with the broader education community in an effort to advance the field of service-learning. Each recognized school will define its individual leadership role based on its unique experiences and abilities. For example, a Leader School may open its campus to visitors from

other schools, provide training to peers, present at conferences, develop materials to disseminate to others, or contribute to local, state, and national service-learning policy and implementation. A Leader School may convene educators from its community for service-learning forums or inservice training, collaborate with nearby colleges of education, serve as a teaching lab for preservice teachers, share curricula with other educators, present at school board meetings, or promote service-learning in publications or on line.

To assist the recognized schools in their leadership efforts, the Corporation for National Service will facilitate information exchange among the Leader Schools and also provide technical assistance in leadership to all the Leader Schools. In addition, state education agencies and state commissions on national and community service may be able to provide other forms of support to the Leader Schools. In addition, by sharing with one another, the Leader Schools will function as a learning community and help each other build leadership capabilities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

In its third year, 2000-2001, the National Service-Learning Leader Schools program will recognize middle schools and high schools for their exemplary efforts to integrate student service into curricular and cocurricular activities. Public, private, and parochial schools from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Indian Tribes, and the U.S. Territories are eligible to apply to become National Service-Learning Leader Schools. The eligibility criteria are the following:

- ◆ The applicant must be a ***school***, not an individual or a community-based organization. A school within a school is eligible, provided it has separate and distinct administration/leadership and a clearly articulated mission.
- ◆ *High Schools* (secondary schools including some combination of grades 9-12) may apply. If a school is K-12, only the secondary component is eligible to submit an application under the high school category.
- ◆ *Middle Schools* serving any combination of grades 5-9 may apply. If a school is K-12, K-8, or 7-12, only the middle level component is eligible to submit an application under the middle school category.
- ◆ Service-learning must be ***broad-based***, i.e., occur at many levels at the school and involve a substantial percentage of the students. A single class or single cocurricular activity incorporating service-learning that only involves a small number of the school's students and teachers would not qualify.

HOW DO SCHOOLS APPLY?

Up to 100 schools in each category (middle school and high school) will be recognized as National Service-Learning Leader Schools. These schools will be selected through a two-tier process involving state review and then national review.

All applications will first be screened at the state level—see instructions on the next page. Schools in New Jersey interested in seeking recognition and serving others through the National Service-Learning Leader Schools program will apply to the New Jersey Department of

Education. The New Jersey Department of Education will then be responsible for making nominations to the Corporation for National Service. New Jersey is eligible to submit five nominations for each category (middle school and high school) to the national review panel for consideration. ***At least two Leader Schools that meet the national selection criteria will be designated in our state.***

Schools chosen as the state nominees will be required to prepare an application portfolio to be submitted to the national review panel. Presented in a three-ring binder, the portfolio should be a compilation of evidence that demonstrates the applicant's commitment to service-learning; illustrates that its service-learning activities are exemplary, broad-based, and integrated into the curriculum and life of the school; and shows that the school merits national recognition for its efforts. In particular, the portfolio should provide evidence that the applicant meets the criteria for selection described in this section. National application instructions will be provided in December.

The application portfolios of the state's nominees must be forwarded to the national review panel by the state coordinator with the official nomination form. A national peer review panel will make recommendations to the Corporation for National Service and the selected schools will be announced in the spring of 2001. All selection decisions are final. There will be no appeal process.

The following box highlights the timeline.

<i>Timeline</i>	
October 19, 2000	State applications available, State selection processes begin. Schools prepare applications to submit to state coordinators.
Question and Answer Sessions:	For date, time and locations of T/A's contact Linda V. Rivera (609) 292-1834
November 28, 2000	Deadline for submission of state application to NJ Department of Education. <i>Make sure applications are postmarked by Nov. 24.</i>
December 5-12, 2000	New Jersey State Application selection process.
December 13, 2000	Notification of national nominees and New Jersey Service-Learning Leader Schools announced.
December 19, 2000	National Nominee Orientation. National Application will be given out. Question and answer session about application processes.
February 9, 2001(tentative)	Submission of national nominees to Corporation for National Service.
April 2001	National review panel convenes to evaluate state nominations.
May 2001	New Jersey Service-Learning Leader Schools recognition event.
May 2001	National Service-Learning Leader Schools announced.
June 2001	National Recognition Event, Washington, D.C.



STATE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To ease the burden on applicants and to speed the review process at the state level, we are requesting preliminary applications from all interested schools. A review panel at the Department of Education will review this short application. Five applicants in each category (middle school and high school) will be selected to prepare full portfolio applications for the national competition. The state application consists of four parts:

- I. Cover page / School Profile Form**
- II. Overview of service-learning at the school**
- III. Leadership proposal**
- IV. List of evidence**

Instructions for the preliminary application follow.

I. Cover Page / School Profile

Please complete the attached school profile form providing basic information about your school. Please note that it is two pages. Be sure to have the principal sign the profile and attach it as the “cover page” of your application.

II. Overview of Service-Learning at your School

Please provide a narrative not to exceed two pages highlighting how service-learning at your school meets the essential elements listed in the attached page. These essential elements are the selection criteria for the national review panel. Also consider highlighting the following:

- How does service-learning help the school meet its mission and fulfill its vision of education?
- How many students, teachers, and administrators are engaged in service-learning at your school? Is service-learning considered “broad-based” in your school?
- What is the history of service-learning in your school? Briefly explain the origin

and development of service-learning and service by students at your school.

- How does cocurricular service by students enrich the teaching and learning that takes place at your school?

III. Leadership Vision

As noted above, National Service-Learning Leader Schools will serve as “active winners” for two years. Each National Service-Learning Leader School will develop its own unique plan of service leadership activities. On one page or less, describe what your school could do to assist other schools or other members of the education community to advance service-learning.

IV. List of Evidence

If you are selected to represent New Jersey before the national review panel, you will create a portfolio of evidence demonstrating that your school meets these essential elements. Please list evidence you might present in your institutional portfolio. Do not provide the actual items at this time. You may attach descriptions of the items that might be helpful to the reader. Please limit your list to ½ page.

Question and Answer Sessions

This year we are providing applicants with the opportunity to attend four question and answer sessions hosted by our current National Service-Learning Leader Schools. They are located throughout the state. All sessions will be held from 3:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Please call Linda V. Rivera at (609) 292-1834 to receive a completed list of scheduled sessions. You may also visit our web site for the list of sessions: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/lisa>

Preview copies of the National Application form will be available at the sessions.

Application Submission Instructions

Format Guidelines—Applications should be submitted on 8½” x 11” white paper using at least a 12-point font and one-inch margins.

Number of Copies—Please submit five (5) copies of your application. (1 original and 4 additional copies)

Due Date—All preliminary applications will be due by **4:00p.m. on Tuesday, November 28, 2000**. All applications must be postmarked by November 24, 2000.

Send your application to: Linda V. Rivera
NJ Learn and Serve America Program
Department Of Education
Office of Community Services
100 Riverview Plaza
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625 - 0500

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Evidence of the existence of all five of these elements are required for a school to be selected as a 2001 National Service-Learning Leader School.

Element 1: Service-learning is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students.

A National Service-Learning Leader School should have clearly defined goals for service-learning related to the curriculum. Assessments of service outcomes should be made from multiple perspectives (e.g., students, community participants, faculty, etc.). Teachers should assume the role of coaches/coordinators/mentors while students take an active role in the learning experience. Students participating in service should receive some form of recognition from the school that encourages and honors their service.

Element 2: Service is coordinated in and well integrated into the life of the high school.

A National Service-Learning Leader School should incorporate service-learning activities into the mission/vision of the school, offering a substantial number of students opportunities to participate in service activities. The school should be able to demonstrate how service has had a positive impact on the school. The school climate/culture should be supportive of service and systemic support for service-learning should be evident through a variety of activities (e.g., ongoing professional development opportunities on service-learning for teachers, principals and others; school policies that support and encourage the integration of service-learning across the curriculum, service-learning is an essential element of school reform/improvement plans, etc.).

Element 3: Service-learning activities are designed to foster civic responsibility.

A National Service-Learning Leader School should explicitly connect service experiences to concepts of social responsibility, citizenship, and civic engagement. Service-learning experiences should strengthen the relationship between the

students and the community (e.g., build understanding between students and their community, address issues of multiculturalism and diversity). Leader Schools should include students in leadership roles in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the service-learning experience.

Element 4: The school provides structured time for the student to reflect on the service experience.

A National Service-Learning Leader School should offer numerous opportunities for reflection and/or critical analysis before, during, and after service using multiple forms of reflection (e.g., group discussion, individual discussion, presentations, journals, etc.). These opportunities should allow students to evaluate, synthesize, and apply learning from their service experience to their own lives and to the broader community.

Element 5: Service is conducted in and meets the needs of a community.

A National Service-Learning Leader School should engage in service that is conducted in the community and designed to address its particular needs. This includes taking steps to define the community (e.g., the school, another school, the neighborhood, or the city/town), identify the need(s) (e.g., health, environmental, the needs of other children and youth for mentors, tutors, or after school programs) and developing a plan to meet the need(s). The service should be conducted in partnership with, at a minimum, representatives of those receiving service (e.g., community organizations, other schools, universities, or others engaged in service).



NEW JERSEY STATE APPLICATION

High School Profile Form

Name of School: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

School District: _____ County: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

1. Type of High School (check one):

☐ Public School ☐ Public Charter School ☐ Private School

2. School Population (please fill in the blanks):

_____ Number of 9th grade students

_____ Number of 10th grade students

_____ Number of 11th grade students

_____ Number of 12th grade students

_____ *Total student population*

_____ Number of faculty and administrators

3. Percentage of students at your school who participate in service-learning activities at the high school during the year: _____

4. Number of teachers and other school personnel engaged in service-learning: _____

5. Number of community-based agencies participating in service-learning activities at the high school during the year: _____



NEW JERSEY STATE APPLICATION

Middle School Profile Form

Name of School: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

School District: _____ County: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

1. Type of Middle School (check one):

☐ Public School

☐ Public Charter School

☐ Private School

2. School Population (please fill in the blanks):

_____ Number of 5th grade students

_____ Number of 6th grade students

_____ Number of 7th grade students

_____ Number of 8th grade students

_____ Number of 9th grade students

_____ *Total student population*

_____ Number of faculty and administrators

3. Percentage of students at your school who participate in service-learning activities at the middle school during the year: _____

4. Number of teachers and other school personnel engaged in service-learning: _____

5. Number of community-based agencies participating in service-learning activities at the middle school during the year: _____

6. Please use the table below to list course, subject area(s), and grade levels of all courses that use service-learning.

COURSE	SUBJECT AREA(S)	GRADE LEVEL

Authorization

I certify that the information contained in this application is true and accurate.

Signature of Principal or Authorized School Official

Date